

Daddy Adventure Day

By Dace Keane and Sue Rama

Today is the day Daddy is going to take his son on an adventure. The son will not allow Daddy to check his phone or read the paper on these days, but he will allow him to take him to the baseball stadium. At the game daddy spoils his son with many cool souvenirs. The son even catches a foul ball! This was a heartwarming story of a father and his son just having a great day with each other. Many children do not have these opportunities with either parent. This story would be a great story to read to explain the importance of a parent/child adventure once in awhile. It would be a great story for preschool or kindergarten in any library.

Lara Morrow

Love, Splat

By Rob Scotton

Splat loves kitten and today is Valentine's Day. He wants to make sure that he looks just right. However every time Kitty saw Splat she would pull his ears, poke his belly and call him smelly and then run away. Splat decides to save his valentine for kitten for recess time. Before Splat can give Kitten the Valentine Spike teases him, telling him kitten couldn't like him. Spike gives Kitten a HUGE Valentine. Splat grows and throws his valentine in the trash and turns away. When Splat isn't looking Kitten sees the card and takes it out of the trash to read it. Kitten finds Splat and gives him her valentine, in her very best handwriting is three little words " I Like You." Cute, Cute, Cute! I loved this book about a first crush. This would make an excellent read- a- loud on Valentine's Day in the classroom for lower elementary.

Lara Morrow

Kick

By Walter Dean Myers & Ross Workman

Kevin Johnson, a 13-year-old, and a good soccer player. He is also the son of an officer who was killed in the line of duty, and that is why Sergeant Jerry Brown agrees to befriend Kevin along with looking into his case and hopefully keeping Kevin from the detention center. As the relationship develops, Kevin is able to really talk to Sergeant Brown and the Sergeant is able to help Kevin come to an understanding about controlling his temper. The lighter side of the novel involves the Sergeant learning about the game of soccer. An interesting aspect of the book is that Myers writes the chapters dealing with Sergeant Brown's perspectives while Workman writes the alternate chapters from Kevin's perspective. Together they have produced an interest filled, fast-paced book that soccer fans, reluctant readers, and the male gender 6th grade and up will enjoy. This volume will add greatly to the public and school library.

Pat Thompson WSC

Best of the Best

By Tim Green

Six foot tall, 12-year-old, Josh LeBlanc is a baseball hitting maniac and with his dad's guidance and encouragement he will fulfill his dream of getting a spot in the Major League, but for now he need to concentrate on playing at the Little League World Series. The concentration needed to be an asset to a winning team is getting harder and harder for Josh to keep as he hears the fights his parents have and then he hears that "D" word mentioned. When Josh's dad moves out of the house and shows up at games with a girlfriend, it takes everything Josh has to concentrate on the game. Benji and Jaden, Josh's best pals help him keep his personal distractions in line and add much to the story line.

Green has written an excellent fast moving, interest grabbing, novel about what it takes to be on a team and in a family.

Excellent reading for 5th grade and up including the reluctant reader, this volume is aimed at the male gender, although a sports minded female will enjoy the story line too. A great book for school and public libraries that I think should receive a two thumbs up recommendation.

Pat Thompson WSC

A Dog's Way Home

By Bobbie Pyron

Eleven year old Abby Whistler, and her beloved Shetland sheepdog, Tam, are headed home from an agility contest, when an accident sends Tam's kennel flying over the edge of the mountain and down into a fast-moving creek, leaving Tam injured and Abby in the hospital. Thus begins the journey of many months and hundreds of mile to reuniting girl and dog. The chapters alternate between Abby's thoughts and life with her mother and the journey of her country band player dad and Tam's journey and his learning how to live outdoors through fall rains and winter snows. If you enjoyed the "Lassie Come Home" or the "Incredible Journey" you will love this easy read, fast paced novel set in the Blue Ridge

Mountains that is written for 5th grade and up. A most enjoyable book that would make a great addition to public or school libraries or as a great gift for that young readers.

Pat Thompson WSC

Worms for Lunch

By Leonid Gore

This is a very sweetly illustrated, simple flip book that lets kids guess what different animals like for 'lunch' and it is fun because it starts with worms and ends there too. Preschool children will enjoy looking at this book on their own and hearing it read many times. This is a great book for any collection; however the flaps are not very sturdy so it will require some mending.

Heather Reid, Home school parent, Omaha, NE

Dogs on the Bed

By Elizabeth Bluemle

This is a great book for dog lovers of any age. This story is about a family who truly make their dogs a part of their family, even working through sleeping arrangements to come up with the best fit. The illustrations are cute and the text's rhyming meter makes this a fun read aloud book. This book is recommended for any collection.

Heather Reid, Home school parent, Omaha, NE

What the Grizzly Knows

By David Elliot

This is the very sweet story of a little boy's dream when his teddy bear becomes a grizzly, and so does he. They roam the woods together doing all things grizzly. It ends with just enough of a hint that kids will be trying to decide what's real and what's not. The illustrations are beautiful and the lilt of this poem turned book will be engaging as a read aloud. This book is recommended for younger children and any collection.

Heather Reid, Home school parent, Omaha, NE

Lots of Dots

By Craig Frazier

This is a very clever book! The illustrations are full of color and fun. I didn't know how interesting a bunch of dots on a page could be. The text with its rhyming pattern makes this a very fun book for young children through early elementary age. This would be a great book to use as a model for a class project. This book is recommended for any collection.

Heather Reid, Home school parent, Omaha, NE

Mystery Vine

By Cathryn Falwell

This is a wonderful story that brings the wonder of gardening right down to a child's level. The illustrations are wonderful, full of color, interesting and simple but with great details too. Kids of any age, preschool through early elementary level will enjoy the predicting needed to figure out the "mystery vine" and since this story is told in rhyme, they'll want to reread it many times, even after then know the ending. The recipes in the back are a great addition for hands on science and cooking projects. This book is recommended for any collection.

Heather Reid, Home school parent, Omaha, NE

Ballet for Martha: Making Appalachian Spring

By Jan Greenberg and Sandra Jordan

This is the wonderful TRUE tale of the collaboration of Martha Graham(choreographer/ballerina), Aaron Copland (composer) and Isamu Noguchi (sets/props) while putting together a very unique story describing settlers lives through ballet. This book drove us straight to You Tube to watch the actual "Appalachian Spring," with the same choreography, music and sets that are described in the book. To say, it was exciting and attention grabbing is an understatement. This is a TERRIFIC book for use in a music or art class to show how different people work together to bring history alive. Great for elementary aged students, but people of all ages will love this book. This book is recommended for any collection.

Heather Reid, Home school parent, Omaha, NE

Story County Here We Come!

By Derek Anderson

This is a very interesting (not realistic) story that describes a farmer and his farm animals "making" a farm as one would construct a house. It is fun and the illustrations are cute and colorful. This will bring a chuckle or two from preschoolers and Kindergarteners and would be a good supplement to a farm unit AFTER they know how a farm really works and can appreciate the silliness. This book is recommended for any collection and farm lovers everywhere.

Heather Reid, Home school parent, Omaha, NE

Baby Bear, Baby Bear, What Do You See?

By Bill Martin Jr. and Eric Carle

This is another in the long list of books with similar names. This book features animals of the woods and forest mostly and has some great verbs to learn along with interesting animals. The activities at the back make this a reading unit all by itself. This book is recommended for preschool or Kindergarten students and for any collection with other books by the same authors.

Heather Reid, Home school parent, Omaha, NE

Pirates of Crocodile Swamp

Jim Arnosky

Eleven year old Sandy and his nine- year- old brother Jack are picked up from school by their alcoholic father. Now they are in the Florida Keys, a long way from their home in Philadelphia. Though they are too afraid to check, they are sure their father killed their mother. Jack convinces Sandy to run away and take residence on Crocodile Swamp where their father will never find them. They meet Alfredo, an old Cuban Sailor, who helps them in ways the two boys never expected. With an Accelerated reading level of 4.4, this is a fast action story with crocodiles and sharks that also deals with living in a dysfunctional family and how one might use their imagination to find a way out. Sure to be a hit with the boys.

Diane Limoges

The Chihuahua Chase

By A.E. Cannon

Addie May Jones is always being picked on by Teddy Krebs. Why doesn't he find someone new to pick on? Now in a turn of events Teddy is asking Addie to help him find his Chihuahua, Phantom. Teddy is sure that sixth grader Zack Rust is somehow involved because of a Chihuahua race that Zack and Teddy have entered their dogs in. Addie May, who has a crush on Zack, is sure there must be another answer to Phantom's disappearance. So Addie May and Teddy join forces to solve the mystery. With a reading level of 3rd grade through 5th grade, the Chihuahua Chase deals not only with the mystery of a missing pet but also first love. A fun read for early chapter readers.

Diane Limoges

The Julian Game

By Adele Griffin

When Raye and her best friend Natalya set up a Facebook page for the imaginary Elizabeth Lavenzck they are only looking for a way to talk to guys that would never have anything to do with the two of them. Raye is attending Fulton High on a scholarship and would love to be a part of the in crowd. When the popular Ella Parker seeks her out, Raye ignores Natalya's advice and starts to hang out with Ella. When Julian, the guy Ella has a crush on, seeks out Raye she becomes a target for Ella's revenge. This book is recommended for grades 8 and up. The potential hate that can be spread through cyberbullying is well addressed. Hopefully readers will be reminded once again to think twice about how they handle themselves on the net where even the most private can become public knowledge with the touch of a key.

Diane Limoges

The Locket

By Stacey Jay

A high school girl discovers her grandmother's locket. She finds the locket has special powers that transport her to the past, present, and future. Trusting the locket helps her to cope with the highs and lows of teenage dating and high school. This is recommended for grades 5th- 8th in both public and school libraries. Readers who enjoy the out of the ordinary will delight in reading this book.

Shelia Cermak

The Waters and the Wild

By Francesca Lia Block

A lonely only child with some problems has some trouble fitting in and accepting herself until she meets a boy with many of the same challenges, with his friendship and their imaginations she comes to accept herself and feel content. This book is recommended for grades 3rd- 6th, in both school and public libraries. Vocabulary is a little more difficult than many books for this age level. An excellent book for those readers who like things a little bit strange or supernatural.

Shelia Cermak

Labracadabra

By Jessie Nelson, Karen Leigh Hopkins

A mother surprises her son by acquiring a dog from the pound. The dog's fascinating tail helps him become an endearing part of the child's life. This book is recommended for grades 2nd- 4th, in any library. The book has great full page illustrations. Authors present, in a delightful way, the importance of adopting a pet and what joy it can bring into the life of a child. The enthusiasm will keep the reader from laying the book down until it is completed.

Shelia Cermak

Abigail Iris

By Lisa Glatt and Suzanne Greenberg

A young girl experiences the desires of belonging and being a part of a best friend's family vacation. This book is recommended for grades 2- 6, in any library. The book features illustrations. This book is easily readable and holds a readers' interest. Authors did a superb job of catching a young girl's excitement of a first new experience and the contentment of having a best friend.

Shelia Cermak

Goldilocks and the Three Bears

By Angela Santomero

Whyatt plays in his brother Jack's room and makes a mess. Jack is pretty upset when he comes back. Whyatt goes to his friends the "super readers" for a way to fix things with Jack. They tell him the story of Goldilocks and how she makes a mess in the bears' house. Whyatt figures out if he says he's sorry to his brother Jack will forgive him like the bears did Goldilocks. This book is recommended for kindergarten through 2nd grades in any library. In theory it is a great idea, but I didn't like how it was done.

Elaine Tobias

Sugar and Ice

By Kate Messner

Claire thought her life was exciting enough, and then she got an ice skating scholarship to Lake Placid to train with an Olympic coach. She doesn't really like the coach or some of her fellow skaters. In fact some of them are downright mean to her. She wants to quit, but doesn't want to end her dream. What should she do? This book is recommended for grades 5th- 8th in any library. This book contains lots of good info about skating. It was slow going at first, but 30- 40 pages in it began to get more interesting. Not sure if the real skating world is like this or not, it makes me glad no one in my family is involved in it.

Elaine Tobias

When The Whistle Blows

By Fran Cannon Slayton

In 1943, Jimmy Cannon is a junior high student living in the fictional West Virginia railroad town of Rowlesburg, with everything in the town revolving around the railroad. The jobs, entertainment, the work and moral ethics of Jimmy's strict father and especially the tradition of the first day of hunting season are told through Jimmy. Starting in 1943, each chapter focuses on Halloween of succeeding years through 1949, and we are part of Jimmy's Halloween adventures, night time pranks, and his championship high school football team. This book recommended for middle school and any other library collections. Starting in 1943 and proceeding through 1949, each chapter starts and finishes on Halloween of the current year. I really enjoyed learning Jimmy's life and family told in this way. The railroad background was interesting and I would recommend the book, especially for young boys.

Deb Daehnke

Camilla

By Madeleine L'Engle

Fifteen-year-old Camilla lives on the Upper East Side of New York City and has had a very privileged life. She has been protected by her parents, her nanny and the servants who work in their apartment. She has even been protected at school. But she suspects her mother is having an extramarital affair and she begins questioning everything about her life, her parents and best friend, Luisa. She then meets Luisa's brother, Frank, and her life changes. She no longer feels so sheltered but struggles with the feelings she has for her parents. This book is recommended for Junior High readers and for any library collection. It was an ok book with probably more appeal to girls than boys. I kept expecting more to happen and I was somewhat let down at the end. Young teenage girls might commiserate with Camilla if they think they have been involved with a boy and then feel they have been dumped by him. If library funds are tight, I think there are better books available.

Deb Daehnke